

Minutes  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
Chippokes Plantation Farm Foundation  
Monday, October 7, 2002, 2 p.m.  
Chippokes Farm & Forestry Museum Workshop

Present:

Mr. E. C. Michael Abley  
Delegate William K. Barlow  
Ms. Shirley Davis  
Mr. E. Henry Doggett, III

Mr. W. C. Doss  
Mr. Alan V. Monette  
Mrs. Linda D. Morse  
Senator Frederick M. Quayle

Absent:

Mr. J. Carlton Courter, III  
Mr. Robert M. Felts, Jr.  
Mrs. Judy S. Lyttle  
Mr. Joseph H. Maroon

Dr. Peter B. Schultz  
Delegate Mitchell Van Yahres  
Mr. W. Bruce Wingo

Staff:

Mr. Leon App  
Mrs. Carol Bowman

Mrs. Donna S. Sharits  
Mrs. Katherine R. Wright

Other:

Mr. Carlton S. Abbott  
Mr. Gene Crabtree  
Mr. Robert Crawshaw

Ms. Jane Jacobs  
Mr. John A. Soderberg

Chairman Quayle welcomed new Board members, Mike Abley, Shirley Davis, and Linda Morse. Each of these members gave some background of themselves. Delegate Mitch Van Yahres also has been re-appointed after an absence of approximately two years. He could not attend because his wife just got out of the hospital. Chairman Quayle also welcomed Alan Monette and Henry Doggett on their reappointment. Attached are the new board member resumes.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Past Minutes**

Senator Quayle had two changes to the minutes. The first change was on page 1 regarding Bob Felts' name, and the other change was on page 4 at the bottom. The word retaining needs to be changed to obtaining.

**South Hampton Roads Resource Conservation and Development Council**

Mr. Gene Crabtree explained that the Council was trying to be certified. Last year, there were 40 councils up for certification, and their Council was not selected. There is hope it will be selected this year. He passed out a folder to everyone with background information. The Council will match grant needs with grant sources and even assist with writing the grants if needed.

A couple of examples of projects are for a large animal (horse) incinerator and to reduce the risk of wildfires at Gatlin Point.

Mr. Crabtree wanted to let us know about this resource, and it may be that this could be a resource for Chippokes. Mrs. Sharits asked what was the average size of grants, and Mr. Crabtree stated \$3,000 to \$10,000.

### **Comprehensive Site Plan – Chippokes Farm & Forestry Center**

Carlton Abbott distributed four handouts, and presented a PowerPoint review of the project. Mr. Abbott explained that the PowerPoint presentation could be altered as needed. The Board took a few minutes to review the handouts.

As described in the PowerPoint presentation, Phase I includes the landscaping of the area, an amphitheater, and an educational building. The educational building includes two classrooms, a small kitchen, and a large multipurpose room that can be used as a classroom as well. The foyer and hallways are spacious, and can be used as exhibit space. Also, the Agricultural and Forestry Hall of Fame is placed along the classroom hallway wing until such time as an independent structure can be built. Also in the building are bathrooms, office space, and an exhibit area. The proposed square footage of this building is 15,738. There are adequate parking spaces for the building for 300 people. The building will be designed to blend into the landscape with a metal roof.

Close to the educational building is an independent bathroom facility. There is space for a farmers' market and the walkway that can be used to put up tents for special events. Also, there will be space to begin demonstrational gardens.

Phase II includes expansion of the museum exhibits space joining the educational building.

Phase III includes more buildings and outdoor exhibits which were unspecified.

The question arose as to the length of shoreline that needs to be stabilized. Mrs. Sharits stated that she would find out the length and include it in the minutes. (In front of the Visitor Center, 400 LF of shoreline was stabilized in 1989 at a cost of \$110,000. There are 1,500 LF of shoreline scheduled to be stabilized with bond funding.) Hurricane Floyd has changed the landscape of the area. In the bond referendum, there are some funds for shoreline erosion for several state parks; however, there is no figure to indicate the amount that will come to Chippokes.

A question arose about the Master Plan. The Master Plan, which has to be reviewed every five years, has been approved by the Board of Conservation and Recreation, and by the General Assembly and signed. The concept of the Farm & Forestry Center has been included in the Master Plan. The Master Plan does not go to the Art and Architectural Review Board. However, the Site Comprehensive Plan will need to be reviewed by the Art and Architectural Review Board on several occasions as the project develops. The Review Board meets once a month, and the next two meetings are on Friday, November 1, and Friday, December 6. As soon as the Comprehensive Site Plan is completed, it

needs to be reviewed by the Review Board. Mr. Abbott can provide a timeline up to construction.

Mr. Abbott explained that there is a lot of fund raising going on all around. Mr. App explained that State funds would be hard to come by for the rest of the biennium and into the next biennium. The Bond Referendum came about because of the status of the State Budget. For the next six months to a year, it will be very difficult to propose anything.

Mrs. Sharits explained that there might be some sources of funds from the Game and Inland Fisheries, Recreation Access Fund, and the General Obligation Fund. There are opportunities out there.

Mr. Monette stated that he hoped Phase II and III have not been written off. He does not feel what has been presented is enough. The educational center is about the size of the Smithfield Center. What is needed is something dynamic. He explained that he could not go to Joe Luter with only Phase I with no other details on the whole project.

In the educational building there is only 4,000 ft. in exhibits. He compared the space to the workshop where this meeting was being held. We still need to see if we can do public/private partnership.

Mr. Soderberg stated that he thought the idea was to move the museum to the new site. With what is here, there is only enough space for maybe 1/3 of the collection.

Mr. Doggett stated that if we go with the cadillac version, we could always scale back. It could be a backlash though if we can't raise the full amount. We need careful orchestration.

Mr. Monette explained that we need to plan for 3,000 people per day capacity. This is going to be a major attraction in the area with exhibits like the "cave" virtual reality exhibit.

Mr. App stated that he is hearing two things. He is hearing that there is a concern about State finances and to start small and phase in the project. Then he is hearing that there would be a better chance at obtaining more funding with the whole project.

Mrs. Sharits handed out a copy of the synopsis of the feasibility study for the new board members while explaining that potential donors do respond to a project that has a bold intent. The phases are for our purpose.

What is needed is something to take to corporations on the whole project.

Mr. Abbott stated that the annual report for Colonial Williamsburg showed that less than one million people came to visit, and that the staff and Board needs to come to grips with the economic condition of the state and country.

Mr. App stated that with the New River Trail and First Landing State Parks receive 1 million visitors, and the whole State Park system has an attendance of 7 million people.

Mr. Monette stated that he would be reluctant to present this unless we have the broad scope of the project. Also, Phase I does not include working capital figures. However, Mr. Abbott has done a heck of a job so far.

Chairman Quayle stated that Mr. Abbott has done a good job on what we have seen. At the last meeting on May 29, we were concerned about funding and money, so we may have misled Mr. Abbott.

If we are going to seek major donors, we need a full project. It was agreed that Mr. Abbott would present a revised Comprehensive Site Plan, which would include the whole project. Chairman Quayle appointed a committee to review the revised plan in preparation for the Art and Architectural Review Board. The committee will consist of: Henry Doggett, Judy Lyttle, Bob Felts, Pete Schultz, Alan Monette, Linda Morse, Donna Sharits, Kathy Wright and himself as ex officio.

Mr. Abbott stated that he could have the revised plan in two weeks. The plan will then be reviewed by the committee and finalized before presentation to the Art and Architectural Review Board.

Ms. McAdoo explained that with the placement of the educational building, it would displace the playground and picnic shelter. The relocation needs to be included in the plan. Mr. Abbott agreed that this needed to be added to the plan.

### **Development Report**

Comprehensive Site Plan. Mrs. Sharits explained that it has been her intention that this be a full project. She wanted to make it clear to everyone that she has been asking for all phases of the Chippokes Farm & Forestry Center, not a partial project. She further explained that Mr. Abbott had been left on his own for too long, and she did not realize that he needed constant attention. Once this was discovered, she has been working with him on a weekly basis with visits, phone calls and e-mails.

Display Board. Mrs. Sharits pointed out the display board that has been developed and has been used at the Farm and Family Showcase at Virginia Tech on September 4-7, and Smithfield's Chamber Day on September 26. Its next use is on Monday, October 14<sup>th</sup> at the Surry County 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Speakers Series. The speaker will be Carlton Courter, Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Mrs. Sharits extended an invitation for the Board members to attend.

Peanut Shocking Demonstration. On Saturday, October 5 we had a peanut shocking demonstration that was attended by 70 people.

Antique Donation. Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Butler donated 170 hand tools in September.

Newsletter/Solicitation Envelope. The next newsletter will be mailed the end of October and will include a donation envelope that Mrs. Sharits had passed out to everyone. Also, Mrs. Sharits explained that there are some museum note cards on the table if anyone would like some.

Sources of Funds. Mrs. Sharits explained that there are potential funding from the Recreation Access Fund, Game and Inland Fisheries for the pier, and the General Obligation Bond that will come before the voters in November for the shoreline erosion.

Museum Funding Projects. For the Farm & Forestry Museum, there are various funding sources which could assist us for projects such the replacement of the signs in front of the museum, for trams, for climate control of the two small buildings, a new phone system, or for corporate sponsors for educational programs such as the peanut shocking, corn maze, antique restoration, the Steam & Gas Engine Show, the Harvest & Halloween Festival. This is all in addition to the funding potential for the Farm & Forestry Center. The resource she is using is the Virginia Funding Directory.

#### **General Bond Referendum**

Mrs. Sharits reported that she had copies of the Bond Obligation video, which is about 10 minutes long. Anyone may take one to show.

Mr. Doggett explained that he a regional committee co-chairman. The bond would establish three new state parks and the rest of the funding would go to the maintenance of all state parks. The State Park General Bond Referendum would not increase taxes, but rather borrow money.

Because there are no hot issues at the polls this year, the voter turnout is estimated to be low. That is why it is so important that the word is spread about the referendum and the importance of encouraging people to go to the polls to vote in favor of the referendum. This is a General Assembly by-partisan effort with 140 voting for the referendum and three voting against it.

For voters in Tidewater and Northern Virginia, there is the transportation bond referendum, which is a very hot issue.

#### **Budget Reduction**

Mrs. Wright explained that all state agencies have prepared budget scenarios for 7%, 11% and 15%. For Natural Resource agencies, we were also asked to prepare a 5% scenario. As for the content of the scenarios, that information is considered as the Governor's working papers. The Governor will be making his announcement on budget cuts on Tuesday, October 15. Mr. Doggett asked if there would be a budget cut for the 09 contributions account, and Mr. App stated that if it was in the appropriation, then it may or may not be considered. Mrs. Wright stated that the farm rent is in the 09 contributions account along with contributions.

Mrs. Wright further explained that the Governor's limit on budget reductions is 15%. However, when the Governor releases his budget in December, there will probably be more budget cuts being proposed for consideration by the General Assembly in January. Also, there is the Wilder report that will be coming out with its suggestions.

### **Financial Statement**

Mrs. Wright pointed out two financial statements in everyone's folder. The first statement is for the Fiscal Year 2001-2002, and the second statement is for the current Fiscal Year 2002-2003. Both reports are attached.

For the Fiscal Year 2001-2002, the beginning balance was \$559,513.89. The revenues from the 09 Contributions Account and the Checking Account comes to \$88,098.65. The expenditures for the 09 Contributions Account were \$73.00; for the checking account \$21,207.95 and the 01 General Fund \$264,100.19 for a total of \$293,029.14. Of this amount, there was \$91.81 left in the 01 General Fund, which cannot be carried over to the next fiscal year. The adjusted balance is \$354,491.59.

For the Fiscal Year 2002-2003, the beginning balance was \$584,437.59. Of this amount, the 01 General Fund budget is \$229,517.00 for the moment as explained earlier. For the Checking Account, the beginning balance is \$16,756.71, and the 09 Account is \$337,734.88 for a total beginning balance of \$584,437.59. Revenues to date come to \$7,348.72, and expenses to date come to \$70,313.53 for a balance of \$521,472.78.

### **Foundation/Museum Report**

Full-Time Secretary. This position was advertised and interviews scheduled in December. A selection was made. Two days before coming to work, the person declined the position. We immediately re-advertised in January. Within that week, there was a freeze on hiring. In late spring, interviews were scheduled. However, none of the applicants had the right qualifications. We advertised for a third time and scheduled interviews in July. A candidate was identified, however, we were required to interview more applicants. The additional interviews have not been scheduled due to the budget situation and our work schedules.

Farm Contract. This summer, the scope of work for the farm contract was updated, and a copy is in everyone's folder. The Farm Management Committee, consisting of Judy Lyttle, Henry Doggett, Richard Andrews and Graham Copeland, provided assistance in this process.

The Invitation to Bid was issued September 11<sup>th</sup> with the closing taking place on Friday, October 5<sup>th</sup>. There were two bids. Mike Seward of Seward Farms, our current farmland contractor bid \$16,250, and Mac Berryman of Beechland Farms bid \$26,500. The contract is now in the process of being finalized.

History of Farm Contracts. In your folders is a history of the farmland contractors and the rent we have received over the years. As you will see, this is the lowest rent we have ever received since we have been managing the lease. The low bid is a result of the new



federal Farm Bill that eliminated the peanut poundage for farmers, coupled with the drought, and the economic condition of the Country. This low bid is an indication of the critical situation among the area's peanut farmers.

Mr. Doggett explained that he has several concerns about the farm contract that he wanted to be reflected in the minutes. First, in the current farm five-year contract, there is a 10 ft. filter strip around the cropland. In the new five-year contract, which will become effective January 1, there is a 25 ft. filter strip. He explained that 25 ft. is a lot of acreage taken out of production. He stated that he is all for conservation measures, and realizes that in some areas, it may be needed. However, where the cropland is flat, he does not see a need for a 25 ft. filter strip. He realizes that we need to set an example or create a showplace, but wanted to voice his concern with the reduction of acreage for crop production. At \$55 per acre times 46.2 acres of filter strips equals \$2,541 per year times 5 years, for the length of the farm contract, equals a \$12,705 loss for the Foundation.

Ms. McAdoo explained that all state-owned properties have this requirement, and that Chippokes is the last DCR property to come into compliance. Mr. App stated that this is the Governor's state standard for all state properties from a biological standpoint.

The second area of concern is the restriction of corn production in two fields next to cabins 2 and 3. Mr. Doggett is concerned because it will affect the farmer's three-year crop rotation plan. Mrs. McAdoo explained that the back gate is locked at all times, and the front gate open at all times. There has been an increase of instances. With corn growing in front of the cabins, park rangers cannot see the cabins and it is a security issue.

Mr. Doggett's third area of concern is the new trail across the cropland. Mr. Doggett stated that he does not understand why the trail is being installed across the cropland when by going around the filter strip area, the woods can be accessed and creates a longer trail that he thought would be an asset. Ms. McAdoo explained that this is a multi-use trail for horses and hiking, and that she and Mrs. Wright have already talked about this.

Pasture Fencing / Farm Pond. A requirement of the Chippokes Resource Management Plan is to fence off all the ravines in the pasture to prevent the cattle from accessing the ravines and the natural springs. By doing so prevents contamination of the water sources that ends up in the James River and the Chesapeake Bay.

The availability of some extra dollars at the end of the fiscal year in June enabled us to purchase fence posts, staples and barbed wire for the 9/10 of a mile of pasture fencing as mentioned in the financial report.

There are currently two sources of water for the cattle--the natural springs in the ravines and water from the park well. By fencing off the ravines, the only source of water left would be the park well, which is a failing system. Again with some extra funds at the end of the fiscal year, we were able to dig a pond in the pasture in a natural water hole

that already existed. Because of the dry conditions, the pond is slowly filling up. However, the cattle are taking full advantage of the hole for wading.

Plans are to install the fencing beginning this fall with the cooperation of the farm contractor, the Men's Detention Center with Kenneth Gray, the Museum's maintenance ranger, overseeing the project. The project will continue as time and weather permits.

Grant Proposal Submitted for Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund. A grant proposal was submitted for a portion of the pasture fencing. This project was shown as a three-year goal. Funds requested for the project include the cattle loading pen and signage explaining about the fencing of the ravines.

In addition, this grant request includes four soil erosion areas around the Plantation, two of which are drop structures that need repairing. The major drop structure that was severely damaged by Hurricane Floyd is along Chippokes Farm Road. Across the Farm Road is a minor problem with another existing drop structure. Two other soil erosion areas that need attention are located behind the Mansion parking lot, and next to the sawmill. Three of the four soil erosion areas would be excellent sites for signage and provides easy visitor access. The total amount requested is \$19,689.89.

Museum Attendance - The attendance this year through September is 6,410. We still have the month of October and part of November with school SOL tours, Plantation Christmas and the Harvest & Halloween Festival to go.

Visitor Tracking Report - This report is from June through September and is a record of how visitors learned of the Farm & Forestry Museum. A copy was passed out. The top responses of how visitors learned of the Farm & Forestry Museum are:

|                    |    |
|--------------------|----|
| Other              | 33 |
| Campground         | 28 |
| Return Visitors    | 25 |
| Just Stumbled Over | 23 |
| Word of Mouth      | 21 |
| Cabins             | 14 |

There was a question on what "other" means. Mrs. Wright explained that she would find out.

More Statistics to Come. This year, we have developed an extensive tracking system for tracking visitors as well as our programs. A year-end detailed report will be presented to the Board at its November meeting.

Volunteer Report. To date, we have had 95 individual volunteers and 113 group volunteers, and the total hours accumulated so far is 3,883. The Volunteer Recognition event will be on Saturday, November 2. Board members have received an invitation, and



Mrs. Wright expressed the hope that they will attend. This is our time to say thank you for their assistance for the year.

This spring, we lost the assistance of the Women's Detention Center from Chesapeake due to the facility closing. The Women have been cleaning the exhibit buildings and maintaining the grounds every other week. However, we were fortunate to obtain the services of the Men's Detention Center from Capron. The men come every Tuesday and are actually much more hard working than the women were.

Maintenance. We have chickens! The renovation of the chicken house was completed this spring, and the chickens have been quite a success. In fact, we cannot keep people out of the chicken yard!

Kenneth is keeping up the mowing of our areas of responsibility using the new tractor purchased last summer.

Safety Manual. Kenneth Gray is the museum's safety officer, and he works closely with RJ on the Park's staff. He has completed the safety manual for the museum with Ms. Sharits coordinating the formatting and preparation of the safety manual.

Programs. In August, we had our annual mailing of the SOL Brochure to schools from the City of Richmond east.

We are now entering our busiest season of the year with SOL school tours, last weekend's peanut shocking, the Harvest & Halloween Festival, and the Plantation Christmas at Chippokes event that will be October 25, 26, and 27.

We lost the program manager, Cindy Farinholt. Cindy had a baby in the spring, and decided to become a full-time mom the end of July. Kristina Loeffler, our former assistance program manager is still with us.

**Former Board Members.** Mr. Doggett asked that an appropriate letter from the Board be sent to the former members of the Board who were recently rotated off, thanking them for their participation.

### **State Park Update**

Ms. McAdoo passed out a copy of her report (attached). The highlights were as follows:

1. Implemented the use of hangtags in windshields to help with parking fee compliance/recognition.
2. Mrs. Louise Osborne passed away July 4 at the age of 89. She had been the housekeeper for Mrs. Stewart and became a park employee in 1967. She retired in 1983. A tree will be planted at Cabin #3 this fall.

3. Approximately 19,000 visitors attended the 27th Annual Pork, Peanut & Pine Festival in July.
4. Despite the downward trend overall in park attendance, interpretive program participation is up by over 2,000 from last year. Programming includes hearth cooking, an evening program of historic interpretation/storytelling on the beach, a new "Let's Go Fishing" program offered monthly for children, canoe trips, night hikes and special programs.
5. There were six law enforcement instances during this period. When asked, Mrs. McAdoo stated that there has been an increase of alcohol and drug related instances of people who enter the park at night when they are not supposed to be there.
6. Ms. McAdoo reported that there are approximately 95,000 people annually who come to the park.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Katherine R. Wright  
Executive Secretary

Attachments:

1. New Board Member Resumes
2. South Hampton Roads Resource Conservation and Development Council Data
3. Comprehensive Site Plan Maps
4. Financial Statement FY 2001-2002
5. Financial Statement FY 2002-2003
6. New Solicitation Envelope
7. Farm Contract Scope of Work
8. History of Farmland Contractors
9. Visitor Tracking Report for Museum
10. State Park Report – June-September, 2002